

# FACULTY SENATE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

## FACULTY SENATE MEETING

FEBRUARY 21, 2006 – 3:30 PM – 150 SHELBY HALL

### APPROVED MINUTES

**ABSENT WITHOUT ALTERNATE:** Brian Bishop, Noel Engebretson, Martin Evans, Kari Frederickson, Jim Hall, Tatiana Tsakiropoulou-Summers, Karen Burgess, Margaret Garner, Tonyia Tidline, Vivian Wright, Allen Wilcoxon, David Arnold, Allen Parrish

**ABSENT WITH ALTERNATE:** Art Allaway/Micki Kacmar; Jenice "Dee" Goldston/Kagendo Mutua

**GUESTS:** Cresandra Smothers, Dialog; Susan Lucas, Professional Staff Assembly; Adam Jones, Tuscaloosa News; Wesley Hallman, Crimson White; Ismenia deSouza, Graduate Student Association; Gordon Stone, Executive Director of the Higher Education Partnership

Roll call and quorum check by Karen Steckol.

The January 17, 2006 minutes were approved with one correction.

Gordon Stone, Executive Director of the **Higher Education Partnership**, addressed the meeting of the Faculty Senate. Higher Education Partnership represents faculty, staff and students and others with the belief that higher education should reach its maximum potential. HEP was organized nine years ago. This year's proposed state budget for higher education has been recommended by Governor Riley. Higher education funding was improved by the State Legislature this year. There is more money in the Educational Trust Fund this year. The decisions concerning this budget should meet the criteria for a competitive compensation pool, coverage for mandated costs, health insurance costs and the cost of retirement benefits. Those contending for election to the governor's office and lieutenant governor's office were named. When a vote is cast, it should be for those that have higher education and education as a whole as a priority. The State of Alabama's funds depend on the economy. Along with other industries, the auto industry has served as a boost to Alabama's economy. Higher Education Day will be held March 2 in Montgomery. Buses will be provided. The message to the politicians is to be inclusive of education. There are 150,000 potential voters on educational campuses around the state. This is a group of well-informed, influential and interested citizens. Progress is still needed in compensations and salaries. Also, progress is needed in competitiveness of accessibility to draw more Alabamians to attend school in-state and, in turn, participate in the state's work force.

Karen Steckol asked about the legislation passed last year concerning PEEHIP. If a person retires with less than 25 years of service, it costs two percent per year of what the University pays toward PEEHIP. After 25 years, the cost is two percent less. This will be a negative in hiring people in mid-career with 10 or 15 years of career years remaining. Those being hired should be informed about this issue. Gordon Stone stated that this issue should be kept at the forefront, however, the right timeframe should be found to bring this forward. It is an election year and the opinion was that this issue would not be considered

at this time. This legislation would not impact K-12 teachers as much as higher education since they hire very few mid-career K-12 teachers. There was discussion about staff salary comparisons. SREB of Atlanta tracks those comparisons. HEP has a resource guide and every two years they conduct a survey for a cross-reference in this area.

**President's Report** – (*Mathew Winston*) The PEEHIP issue is brought up in meetings with the Provost and other administrators at every opportunity. The issue is a very important one and should be talked about and pushed as often as possible. An email reminder will be sent to every faculty member encouraging attendance for Higher Education Day on March 2. It will also encourage students to attend the meeting. There will be a list of names of participating students posted on the Faculty Senate web page. At the Faculty Senate March meeting, elections will be held for Faculty Senate President, Vice President and Secretary. Nominations will be taken from the floor. The new Senate term begins in April. Check to confirm that those nominated are willing to serve. Officer terms are for one year and senator terms are for two years. Significant issues are the five year review of Deans as addressed by the "Faculty Participation in Selection of Deans and Department Chairpersons and Evaluations of Academic Programs Committee", and the "Merger and Discontinuance of Academic Units Committee" in conjunction with the proposed discontinuance of Industrial Engineering. There was one department member that asked this proposal be reviewed. All faculty members in the department will be reassigned to other departments.

There are five faculty members on the **University Committee on Committees** comprising the majority of voting members on the committee. The Faculty Senate recommends names to the President of the University. There are two members with expiring terms; Rona Donahue, CUC Chair and Wythe Holt. John Mason has served the remainder of Wythe Holt's term. There are eleven faculty members that indicated a preference for CUC membership. Kim Andrus of the Faculty and Senate Governance Committee passed out the ballots. There were no nominations from the floor. John Mason and Bruce Kim were elected to serve on the CUC committee.

The Faculty Handbook states:

### **Committee on University Committees**

#### **Duties**

Make recommendations to the President on the organization and membership of standing committees, review and recommend any needed committee composition description changes as part of its annual duties, and ensure that the committee compositions it recommends conform to the descriptions given in The University of Alabama Standing Committees document.

#### **Composition**

This committee shall consist of five faculty and four staff members, a Faculty Senate representative, and a student representative. The chairperson will be a faculty member chosen from the membership. New faculty members appointed to the committee will be chosen from a list provided by the Faculty Senate. In addition, the following liaison members shall serve in a communications and advisory capacity: Director for Continuous Quality Improvement, Associate Vice President for Human Resources and Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs.

The chair of the committee is elected by the full voting committee

membership from the pool of continuing faculty members on the committee. The election takes place at the final meeting of the spring semester, with the new chair assuming his/her duties at the end of spring semester.

It was pointed out that anyone elected to this committee should be active in faculty governance, and know the importance of this committee. In some years past, the names nominated did not specifically come from committee preference forms. Three members of this committee have expiring terms next year.

Carolyn Cassady was appointed to the Parking and Traffic Regulations Committee.

**Vice President's Report** – (*John Vincent*) The Faculty Senate is scheduled to meet in 150 Shelby Hall through December of 2006. Next year's meetings cannot be scheduled until class meeting times are scheduled. The Steering Committee meeting dates in Shelby have not been confirmed.

**Secretary's Report** – (*Karen Steckol*) Statistics that determine the number of senators that each college should elect were presented. Letters to the Deans with those numbers were sent February 21, 2006.

The numbers are:

A&S 19 ENG 5 SW 2

C&BA 5 HES 2 ELI 1

CCHS 2 LIB 2

CIS 3 LAW 2

ED 4 NUR 2

**Academic Affairs** – (*John Vincent & Marcia Barrett*) – Comments from this committee regarding Chapter 2 of the Faculty Handbook have been forwarded to the Provost. A meeting will be held next week to address Chapters 3 and 4.

**Faculty Life** – (*Steve Shepard & Nick Stinnet*) This committee met two weeks ago to look at the issue of non-tenure professors with access to the faculty grievance system. The issue was discussed and feedback was given in the Steering Committee meeting last week.

**Financial Affairs** – (*Jeanette Vandermeer & Jim Hall*) Following the Steering Committee meeting last week, the co-chairs of this committee contacted the Provost to express continued concern about the PEEHIP issue. It is felt that those presently employed by the University impacted by the legislation passed last year should be grandfathered in. It was also requested that those currently being hired be informed about the impact of this legislation. The Provost stated that this issue would continue to have priority and new employees would be informed.

**Student Affairs** – (*Priscilla Davis & Karen Burgess*) No report.

**Research & Service** – (*Clark Midkiff & Dee Goldston*) No report.

**Faculty & Senate Governance** – (*John Mason & Kim Andrus*) There are two nominees from Arts & Sciences for Ombudsperson. Salli Davis' term expires August 15. The full faculty will vote for one of the two nominees beginning March 1 and ending the

Wednesday before spring break.

**Legislative Agenda** – *(Margaret Garner)* No report.

## **Senate Representative Report**

### **Faculty & Staff Benefits Committee Report --**

The employee's percentage of cost counting premiums and deductibles was reviewed. The cost has remained more or less constant. This includes retired employees. The cost of PEEHIP continues to increase. Currently UA insurance coverage is two-tiered. Those earning less than \$26,000 pay less in premium costs than those earning more. The number was set in 1993-94 and the possibility of recommending an increase for this threshold is being considered by this committee. Creating another tier for the higher income bracket is also being reviewed. There would also be the situation of married employees being employed by UA to be considered.

The proposed resolution for GTA and GRA Medical Insurance was presented and read as follows:

#### RESOLUTION ON GTA AND GRA MEDICAL INSURANCE

Whereas our Graduate Student Association has requested that The University of Alabama provide and pay for single-coverage medical insurance for Graduate Teaching Assistants and Graduate Research Assistants who are not eligible to be covered by their parents'

insurance programs; and

Whereas the President and Provost of The University of Alabama and the Dean of the Graduate School have all given their support to this request; and

Whereas the Faculty and Staff Benefits Committee has endorsed this concept; and

Whereas the Resources and Priorities Committee has likewise voted to support funding medical coverage for our GTAs and GRAs, as indicated above;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Faculty Senate of The University of Alabama supports all efforts of The University of Alabama to provide and fund health care insurance for our graduate teaching assistants and graduate research assistants.

This comes from the Faculty Senate Steering Committee and does not require a second. Discussion included the points that there is an insurance program available for this group (VIVA but most cannot afford it), the exclusion of those covered by parents' insurance programs, compensating those students not covered by parents' insurance coverage, qualifications of other part-time employees, more detail needed, recruiting and loss of graduate students, cost of insurance coverage (\$591,478) and other institutions offer this benefit. The resolution was approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned 5:00 PM